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AUTHOR	Ottenritter, Nan; Barnett, Lynn
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ABSTRACT

This research brief summarizes the findings of a survey conducted in 1996 to determine the involvement of community colleges in the health of their students. The survey gathered information from 535 campuses concerning administration and leadership, curriculum, and community relationships. This report focuses on HIV/AIDS and the extent to which community colleges are offering information and services to prevent HIV infection and other student health problems. Findings indicated that alcohol/other drugs, exercise/fitness, and stress management are the most frequently addressed health issues in classes and presentations. Although 92% of campuses have an official budget for HIV/AIDS education, only 19% of mainstream classes include HIV/AIDS materials. More than half of the colleges have a non-discriminatory policy toward HIV-infected individuals, but only 17% have a campus HIV task force or similar group. In addition, nearly two-thirds of responding colleges have no on-campus reproductive health services. Of those available, services are mostly informational as opposed to offering services such as sexually transmitted diseases (STD) testing and birth control. Of the few colleges that offer HIV testing, three-quarters offer it for free, though more than one-third of the colleges thought that HIV/AIDS was not an issue on their campus. Community colleges most value county health departments, hospitals, and grassroots community organizations as partners for HIV/AIDS information, support, and referral, but 70 percent want more collaboration. (YKH)

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Community Colleges Tackle Student Health and HIV/AIDS

Nan Ottenritter
Lynn Barnett

American Association of Community Colleges

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RESEARCH BRIEF

AACC-RB-98-3

HIV/AIDS and Campus Health

Community Colleges Tackle Student Health and HIV/AIDS

By Nan Ottenritter and Lynn Barnett

Executive Summary

The American Association of Community Colleges' Bridges to Healthy Communities project supports community colleges in offering information and services to prevent HIV infection and other serious health problems in students. The five-year project is part of a national higher education initiative of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Division of Adolescent and School Health.

To determine the involvement of community colleges in the health of their students, AACC conducted a national survey in 1996. The survey gathered information from 535 campuses concerning administration and leadership, curriculum, and community relationships. This report summarizes the findings from that survey. Among the findings:

- Alcohol/other drugs, exercise/fitness, and stress management are the most frequently addressed health issues in classes and presentations.
- Nineteen percent of classes outside of allied health, teacher education, and social/human services programs include HIV/AIDS materials. Another 13 percent have considered doing so.
- Ninety-two percent of campuses have an official budget for HIV/AIDS education.
- Written policies most frequently relate to alcohol/other drugs, sexual assault, disability awareness, and multiculturalism/diversity.
- More than half of the colleges have a non-discrimination policy toward HIV-infected employees and students, but only 17 percent have a campus HIV task force or similar group.
- Nearly two-thirds of responding colleges have no on-campus reproductive health services.
- The most commonly offered reproductive health services on campuses are information-related, describing sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), safe sex, and abstinence.
- The least commonly offered reproductive health services are STD testing and distribution of condoms and other forms of birth control.
- Of the few colleges that offer HIV testing, three-quarters offer it for free.
- More than one-third think that HIV/AIDS was not an issue on their campus.
- Community colleges most value county health departments, hospitals, and grassroots community organizations as partners for HIV/AIDS information, support, and referral, but 70 percent want more collaboration.

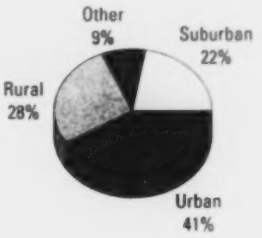
National Survey

In 1995 the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention conducted a National College Health Risk Behavior Survey that collected data on health risk behaviors. In the latter half of 1996, the American Association of Community Colleges distributed its own national survey to the presidents and student health coordinators at all 1,100 community colleges to gather data on administration and leadership, curriculum, and community relationships as they relate to health issues. A total of 535 campuses responded to the initial or follow-up survey, giving a total response rate of 48 percent. The actual percentage of respondents noted in this report refers to the number of respondents for each question.

Persons completing the survey included deans of academic and student affairs, health and wellness personnel, and other institutional leaders. Most respondents were from public colleges. Approximately 41 percent were located in urban areas, 28 percent in rural areas, 22 percent in suburban areas, and 9 percent in "other." Nearly half of the responding colleges had a student enrollment of 1,000-5,000 and one-fifth had an enrollment from 5,000-10,000. The rest were split evenly between those with student enrollments less than 1,000 and greater than 10,000.

AACC's goal is to establish an information baseline for HIV prevention and related health endeavors in community colleges, and to augment AACC's Bridges to Healthy Communities clearinghouse and referral network.

Locations of Responding Campuses

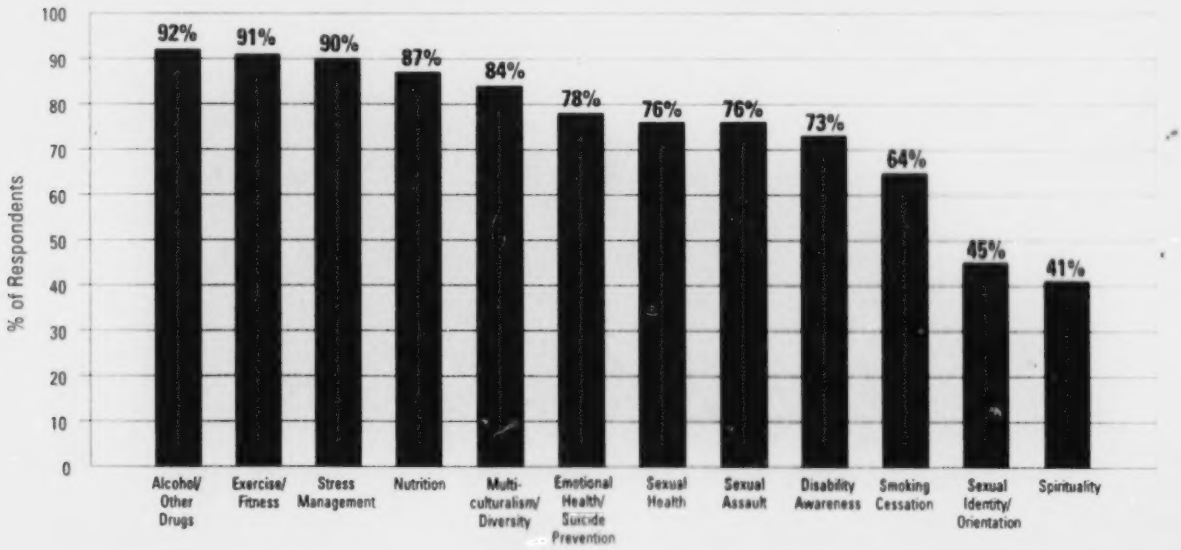


Findings

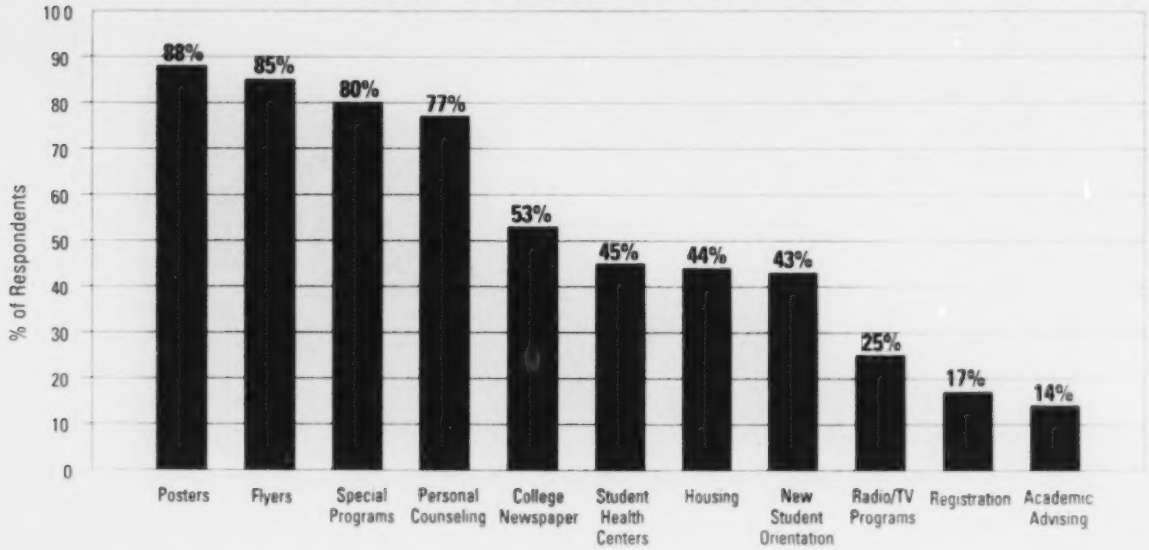
1. How the College Community Learns About Health and HIV/AIDS

Campuses have adopted a variety of strategies for students and staff to learn about HIV/AIDS and other health issues. These include passive programming such as information on posters, brochures, and web sites (developed primarily since the survey was conducted). More active measures include curriculum infusion, special programs, health centers, and inclusion of information in specific activities (e.g. advisement, registration, and orientation). The following charts illustrate some of the approaches taken by community colleges.

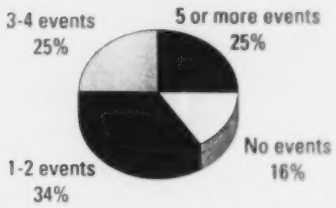
Health Issues Addressed Through Classes or Presentations



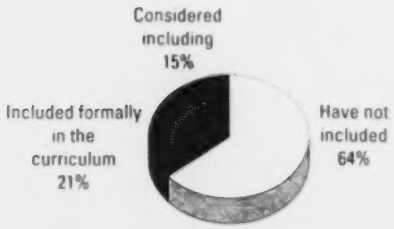
Sources of HIV/AIDS Information on Campus



Campuses Offering HIV/AIDS Conferences/Special Events in the Past Two Years



Colleges that Include HIV/AIDS Issues in the Credit Curriculum*



Excluding Allied Health, Teacher Education, and Social/Human Services Programs

"Our most successful efforts to promote health usually involve a combination of education, policy and technology."

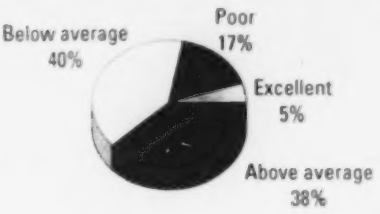
– Charles Deutsch, Director, *National Committee on Partnerships for Children's Health, Harvard School of Public Health*

. 2. Institutional Supports

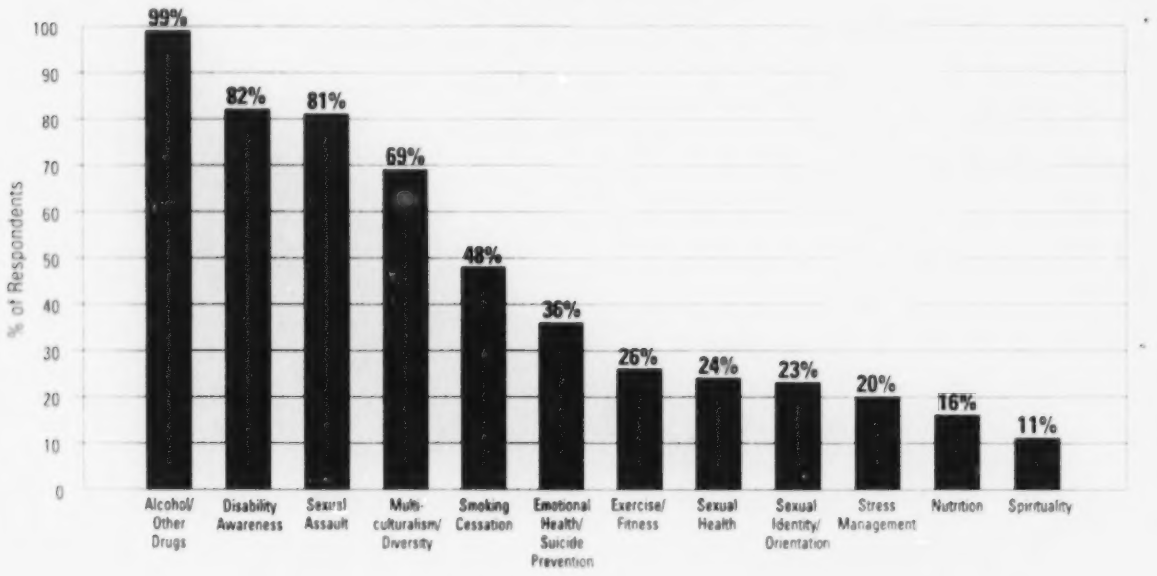
Administration and leadership of a college may play a critical role in health awareness by focusing on the larger, systemic points of intervention and setting institutional priorities. This can be done through strategic plans, funded initiatives, program accreditation processes, periodic reviews, annual budget requests and allocations, rewards such as promotion and tenure, professional development, collaboration with boards of trustees, compliance with federal, state and local laws, and collaboration with the community.

Funding, policies, and personnel supports were addressed specifically in the AACC survey. For example, 81 percent of colleges reported receiving no grant funding for HIV/AIDS. Ninety-two percent reported having no official budget for HIV/AIDS activities, and about three-quarters had no paid staff to support HIV/AIDS activities.

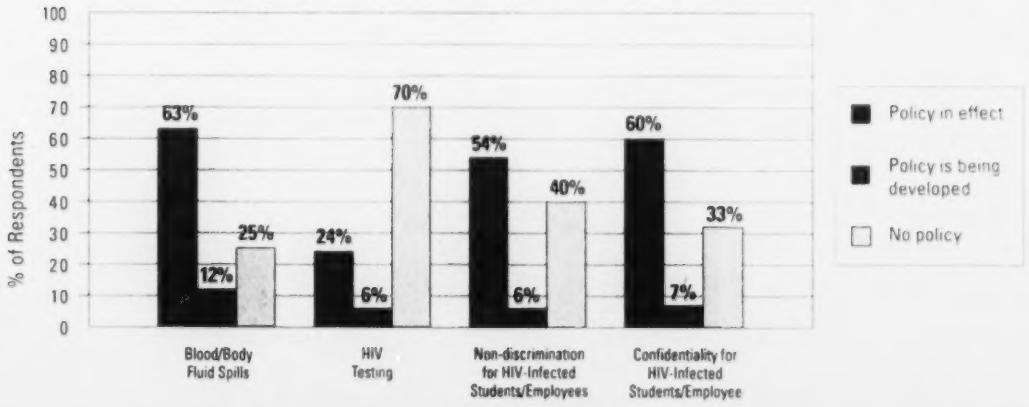
Perception of Availability of Resources for Integrating HIV/AIDS into Curricula



Written Policies on Health Issues

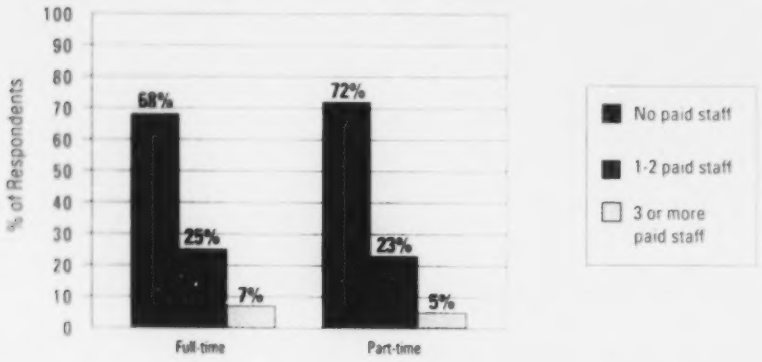


Written Policies* on HIV/AIDS Issues



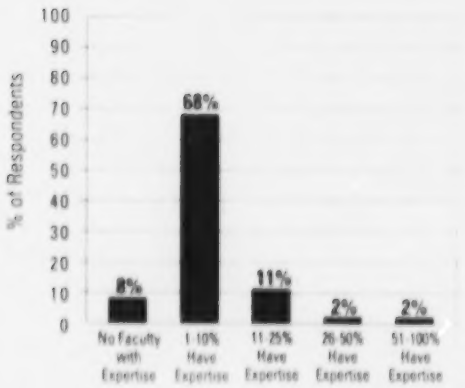
**Other than the Americans with Disabilities Act*

Colleges with Paid Staff for HIV Prevention



A variety of groups are charged with handling HIV/AIDS issues on campus. These include specific HIV/AIDS groups as well as health and safety, infectious disease, drug and alcohol, and wellness committees.

Faculty with Expertise in HIV/AIDS



Campuses with HIV/AIDS Task Force or Similar Groups

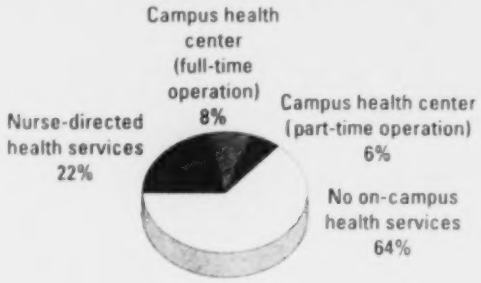
"The success of any institution's academic mission depends not only on the instruction it provides, but on the health climate it creates."

– Charles Deutsch, Director, *National Committee on Partnerships for Children's Health, Harvard School of Public Health*

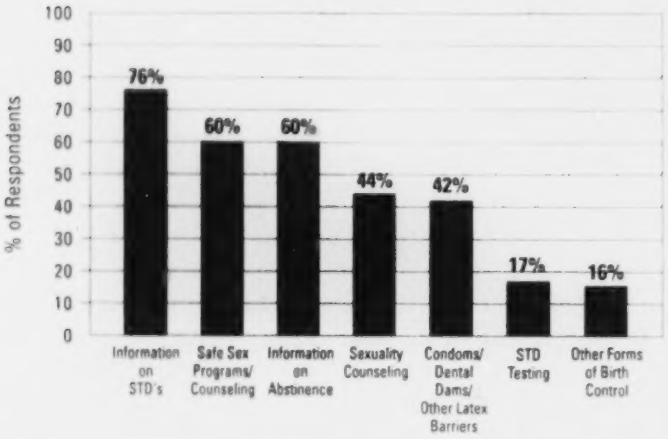
.3. Resources/Services Provided for HIV-prevention

Resources and services are generally designed to meet specific health needs of college students. For example, HIV testing provides needed information that can lead to treatment and prevention. However, it also has other effects. It keeps the topic of health visible and health care accessible to students who might otherwise not have such services. It also helps create a culture of responsibility in which students learn that they can actively create healthier lifestyles. AACC wanted to know specifically about reproductive health services, HIV testing, and services for HIV-infected individuals. The survey also asked for reasons for not becoming involved in HIV/AIDS-prevention activities.

Provision of Reproductive Health Services

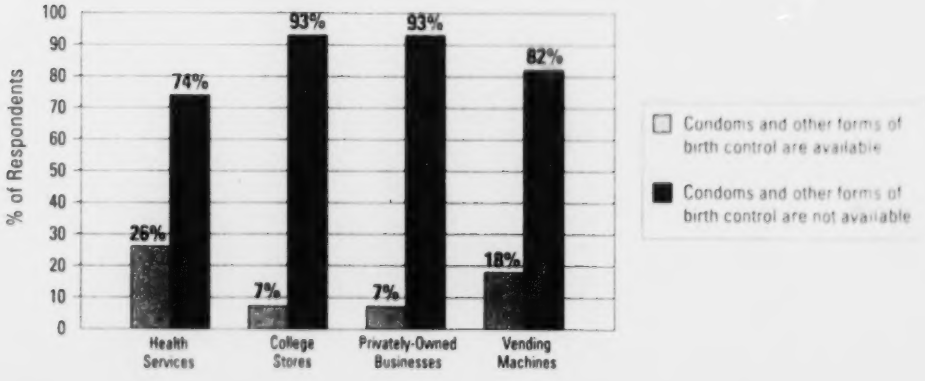

Campus health center (full-time operation) 8%
Campus health center (part-time operation) 6%
Nurse-directed health services 22%
No on-campus health services 64%

Types of Reproductive Health Services

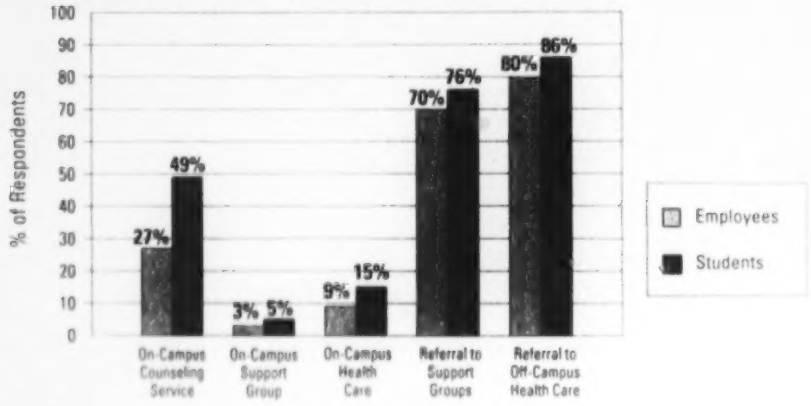


One form of STD testing is testing for HIV. Of the 14 percent of colleges offering HIV testing, 81 percent offer confidential and 19 percent offer anonymous testing. 75 percent do not charge for the test, while 7 percent request a fee and 18 percent require a fee.

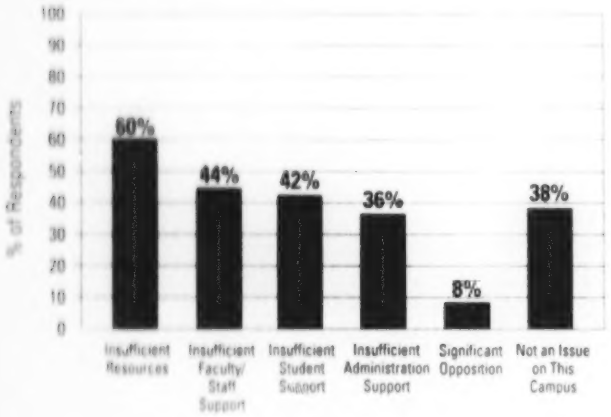
Campus Sources for Distribution of Condoms and Other Birth Control Devices



Services for HIV-Infected Students and Employees



Reasons for Institutional Non-involvement in HIV/AIDS



4. Community Resources

"The answers to the AIDS epidemic will be integrative, connecting, and community building. We will progress beyond personal outcomes to interdependent community health." (Richard Keeling, Director of University Health Service and Professor of Medicine, University of Wisconsin-Madison).

In an attempt to find out more about community-community college relationships, AACC asked about key community organizations and levels of collaboration. The three most popular community organizations for HIV/AIDS-prevention collaboration were county health departments, hospitals, and grassroots community organizations. Although 77 percent of community colleges perceived local community involvement as effective or adequate, 70 percent would like to see even more community-campus collaboration.

Campuses' Preferred Level of Community-Campus Collaboration

Conclusion

Health care is a national priority. Accommodating the changes in technology and the health care delivery is one of the challenges of the twenty-first century. Community colleges can play a major role in this transition by training health care practitioners, educating citizens, and creating environments in which health is the norm, not the exception. The results of this survey indicate some of the areas in which college leaders can take action and make change occur. The following resources provide additional information that can help inform and guide colleges.

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Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *CDC Surveillance Summaries*, November 14, 1997. MMWR 1997; 46 (No. 55-6).

Deutsch, C. 1997. Connecting Health and Learning. *Community College Journal* 67:22-25.

Keeling, R. P. 1996. HIV and Higher Education: From Isolation to Engagement. Reprint from *Liberal Education*. Washington, DC. Association of American Colleges and Universities.

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Ottenritter, N., and Frengel, E. 1998. Students at Risk. *Community College Journal* 68:20-24.

Pilkey, M. (Producer). 1996. *Service Learning: A Community Strategy for HIV Prevention* [videotape]. Washington, DC. American Association of Community Colleges.

Selected Electronic Resources

Community Colleges

American Association of Community Colleges
http://www.aacc.nche.edu/spcproj/hlth_hiv/top.htm

College of DuPage
http://www.cod.edu/service1/Health/health1.htm

Kapi'olani Community College
http://library.kcc.hawaii.edu/aids/

Northern Virginia Community College
http://www.nv.cc.va.us/annandale/health/bridges/bridhome.htm

San Antonio College
http://www.accd.edu/sac/sacmain/aidshiv.htm

Santa Barbara City College
http://www.sbcc.net/studentservices/health/hwp.html

Government

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
http://www.cdc.gov

CDC National AIDS Clearinghouse
http://www.cdcnac.org

HIV/AIDS Treatment Information Service (ATIS)
http://www.hivatis.org

AIDS Clinical Trials Information Service (ACTIS)
http://www.actis.org

AIDSNEWS Listserv
listserv@cdcnac.org

Other

Journal of the American Medical Association - HIV/AIDS
http://www.ama-assn.org/special/hiv/hivhome.htm

The NAMES Project
http://www.aidsquilt.org

Critical Path
http://www.critpath.org

Project Inform
http://www.projinf.org

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Bridges to Healthy Communities

Project Director: Lynn Barnett
Project Coordinator: Nan Ottenritter
Staff Assistant: Charice Morgan

American Association of Community Colleges
One Dupont Circle, NW, Suite 410
Washington, DC 20036-1176
Phone: 202/728-0200, x230
Fax: 202/833-2467
http://www.aacc.nche.edu/spcproj/hlth_hiv/top.htm

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